

# Words for Work Evaluation Report 2011



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# Introduction

## Pilot development

The challenge that led to the National Literacy Trust's new strategic aim to highlight speaking and listening as a key literacy skill came from the business sector, expressing concerns about the lack of appropriate communication skills of the entering workforce. The response was to devise a pilot project, Words for Work, which would bring volunteers from the business sector into schools to work in partnership with year 9 pupils to explore and unlock speaking and listening skills for the workplace. Information on the scoping, development and evaluation of the first pilot year is detailed in the Words for Work Evaluation Report 2010.

## Second pilot year

As well as exceeding the outcome targets set for beneficiaries who took part in Words for Work, the first pilot year was successful in its aim to develop and test the Words for Work programme in consultation with schools, pupils and business volunteers in the two schools, Rosedale College and Bishop David Brown School. The 2010 evaluation report showed that participants felt the activities that were developed and then tested delivered speaking and listening skills and employability awareness in a creative and engaging way.

In preparation for the second pilot year the activities, resources and information that had been gathered over the first year were pulled together into the Words for Work resource pack for schools.

The plan for the second pilot year was to recruit a larger number of schools as Words for Work pilot schools and support them to set up and deliver the Words for Work project themselves. The outcomes for beneficiaries remained the same as in the first year. In addition, we wanted to:

- Test the Words for Work resource for schools with participating schools to assess its content and structure
- Carry out evaluation to measure the ability of the schools to manage and deliver Words for Work and thereby to assess the feasibility of the year two Words for Work model.

In order to evaluate these two new outcomes we developed systems to monitor and measure:

- schools' performance during project set up
- their use of the resource pack and their assessment of it as a scheme of work for their cohort of pupils
- communication with the central project team
- completion of the required tasks before, during and after the project.

More details of these systems, how they were delivered to schools and the monitoring process can be found in the Evaluation methodology section and in appendices f, g and h.

The results from this monitoring are detailed, along with the main outcome targets, in the Key Findings section and in the Lessons Learned section.

## Delivery information

### Schools

Sixteen secondary schools from seven geographical regions around England were recruited to take part in the second Words for Work pilot. The table below shows the list of schools by region. 219 pupils participated this year.

**Figure 1) Schools who expressed an interest in the second pilot year**

Region	School	Took part in the pilot
Staffordshire	Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy (OSSMA)	Yes
	James Brindley College	Yes
	The Co-operative Academy (Co-op)	Yes
Kent	Hartsdown College	No
	Thamesview School	Yes
	Canterbury High School	Yes
	St Edmunds School	Yes
	Charles Dickens School	No
West Midlands	Harborne Academy	Yes
	Heath Park School	Yes
Greater London	Dunraven School	Yes
	Bishop David Brown School (BDB - first year pilot school)	Yes
	Rosedale College (first year pilot school)	Yes
Yorkshire	Balby Carr School	No
Lancashire	Darwen Aldridge Community Academy (DACA)	Yes
Sussex	Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (BACA)	Yes

At the beginning of the academic year, all the schools were given a timeline of tasks and activities that the central Word for Work team would support them to complete, see appendix b for this timetable. Schools were asked to attend an initial briefing meeting and then to sign a partnership agreement to confirm their commitment to taking part in the pilot. Once the partnership agreement was returned, schools were sent a logon id and password with which to access and download the Word for Work resource.

Balby Carr School did not attend the initial briefing meeting and then regretfully decided that they did not have the capacity to take part in the pilot. Charles Dickens and Hartsdown both attended the briefing meeting and requested the partnership agreement. Both failed to sign and return it. We contacted them by phone and Hartsdown stated they had decided to pull out. Charles Dickens said they still wished to participate. We continued to chase them for six weeks but they failed to return the agreement or action any of the other tasks on their timeline. As a result, they were disallowed by the Project Manager in December as it was felt they did not have the capacity to deliver the project effectively. A total of thirteen schools took part in the second Words for Work pilot.

### **Feasibility of School Delivery of Words for Work**

New evaluation systems were created in order to measure the feasibility of schools managing, delivering and evaluating Words for Work independently. This proved a more complex set of data to analyse as in each school the results were different, as were the mitigating factors that affected delivery of the project. Information was captured through:

- ongoing monitoring of emails and phone calls to and from schools
- timings of completion of requested tasks by schools
- monitoring of schools' logging on to the Words for Work resource
- monitoring time spent liaising with volunteers recruited for each school
- an end-of-phase-one evaluation form given to delivery teachers
- observational visits by the project team

In addition to evaluating the feasibility of schools' capacity to deliver Words for Work, we also wanted to look at the level of support needed from the central project team in the main areas of the project. This information was going to be vital in helping us to shape the Words for Work model beyond the two-year pilot and into the future. The questions we wanted to answer included:

- Was the Words for Work resource pack alone sufficient for schools to manage and deliver the project?
- What was the current capacity of the central Words for Work team to manage thirteen schools through the project and how much would that capacity need to increase to significantly scale up numbers?
- How could schools in the same area be linked together?
- Which organisations would help with the engagement of local businesses and the recruitment of volunteers?
- What support/training could be offered to schools prior to the start of the project that might lessen the amount of ongoing support they needed during the project life?

These questions are explored within the Lessons Learned section.

### **Recruiting and Managing Volunteers**

Although all schools were provided with detailed guidance on recruiting volunteers and in most cases links to local organisations that they could approach, in the end only five schools were able to action this. The result of this was that the Words for Work project team spent a lot of time contacting businesses and recruiting volunteers for the schools. In two regions the team had support in this from the local authority. Having done the recruitment, the mindset of both the volunteers and the schools was

that the Words for Work central team were the main point of contact for managing the volunteers. Schools were slow to make contact with their volunteers and left it to the central project team to liaise with them, process CRB checks and manage their expectations prior to the start of the workshops.

One advantage of this scenario was that we began to keep a record of volunteer management which threw up some very interesting information. 91 volunteers from 18 local, regional and national businesses were recruited to work with pupils this year.

### **Delivery Headlines**

The following section provides the headlines of the statistics for the delivery of the Words for Work project in the thirteen pilot schools plus a table broken down school by school. A more detailed description of each school's performance can be found in appendix g and analysis of why schools performed as they did can be found in the Lessons Learned section of this report.

#### **i) Set up and Preparation**

**Nine** schools managed their set up and preparation tasks reasonably efficiently or well and met the majority of their deadlines. **Two** of those schools had a high level of support from their local authority literacy advisor.

#### **ii) Communication with Words for Work Central Project Staff**

**Seven** schools maintained reasonable or good communication with the central project staff for the majority of the project.

#### **iii) Recruitment of Business Volunteers**

**Five** schools recruited their business volunteers themselves. **Eight** schools needed help from the central project team or left it to them to recruit volunteers entirely.

#### **iv) Relationship Management with Volunteers**

**Ten** schools maintained reasonable or good relationships with their volunteers during the majority of the programme although for three of those schools it was sporadic. **Six** schools managed to have good communication and maintain it throughout the duration of the project.

#### **v) Delivery of Phase One**

**Ten** schools delivered phase one of the Words for Work programme successfully. **Two** schools struggled to deliver the workshops effectively and **one** school gave us no data or feedback.

#### **vi) Delivery of Phase Two**

**Eight** schools delivered phase two of Words for Work successfully. **Three** schools delivered it poorly. **One** school didn't manage to deliver it at all. **One** school has given us no data.

#### **vii) Celebration Event**

**Seven** schools held a celebration event at the end of their Words for Work programme to showcase the pupil's work.

## Evaluation Methodology



- a Words for Work workshop in Greater London

To assess the feasibility of the second year of the Words for Work model, evaluation tools were developed by the Words for Work project team and the National Literacy Trust's Head of Research, Dr. Christina Clark, to measure two main strands:

- impact on beneficiaries
- assessing the feasibility of schools delivering the project themselves.

The impact tools were included in the Words for Work resource, and email reminders were sent out to relevant school and volunteer contacts. As an action research project, additional methods of evaluating the project's success, particularly related to the feasibility of schools delivering the project themselves were created. Details of the data tools utilised and analysis of the information collected can be found in the Lessons Learned section of the report and in appendices f, g and h.

As the second pilot-year developed, it became apparent that those schools that were efficient in engaging with the evaluation tools were, on the whole, those who engaged with the project resource fully and delivered Words for Work innovatively and with enthusiasm. Getting schools to complete and send back the evaluations was time consuming and required a lot of reminders and requests by email and by phone. The evaluation tools themselves were effective, but the apparent lack of value that some schools gave to the evaluation process hampered the success of this outcome.

Headline statistics from the evaluation tools are:

- 6 of 13 schools completed all the evaluation tools
- 10 of 13 schools completed the pupil pre-project survey and the post-project pupil survey
- 11 of 13 schools completed the pupil post-project survey
- 6 of 13 schools completed the phase one and final teacher surveys
- 6 of 13 schools completed the skills assessments

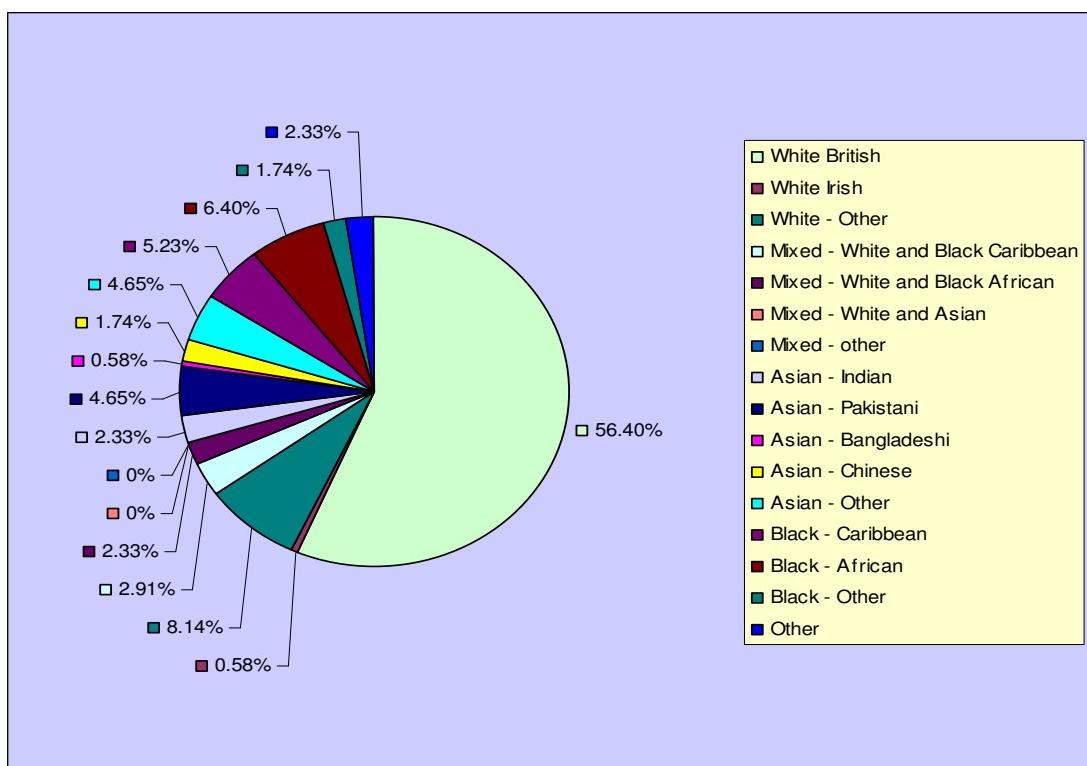
More detailed information on factors affecting evaluation collection can be found in appendix e.

The evaluation tools used to measure the impact of the project on its beneficiaries were largely the same as the ones used in the first pilot year as the outcomes were the same. These tools were both quantitative and qualitative. We utilised Survey Monkey to create online surveys to cut down on paper costs, to enable schools and volunteers to access the surveys at their convenience and to ensure manageable data analysis. Pupils and volunteers were asked to completed questionnaires that collected both quantitative and open-ended data. In addition, teachers were given qualitative questionnaires at the project mid-point and end-point, as well as functional skills assessments for a random selection of pupils who took part in Words for Work. In addition to the online surveys, the Project Manager and Project Officer visited Words for Work sessions at 11 of the 13 schools that delivered the pilot project. During these visits, we observed a session in action, and conducted interviews with two pupils and a volunteer. See appendix d for the interview questions. In addition to the information gathered from interviewing the participants we were able to gather anecdotal information from our observations on the way the project was being delivered, the attitude of the teacher involved, the status of the project in the wider school context and the satisfaction of the volunteers. This information fed into the evaluation of the feasibility of schools delivering the project.

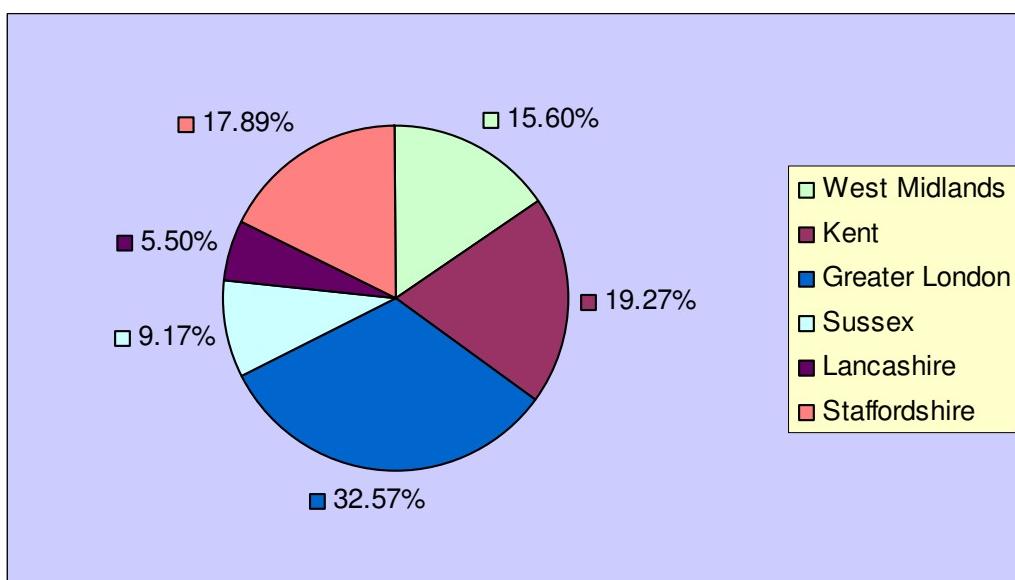
### **Demographical Information**

This chart shows that the majority of pupils that participated in the project describe themselves as 'white British' and 'white other' from the options presented to them (full list detailed on right hand side of the figure).

**Figure 2) Ethnic background of participating pupils**



**Figure 3) Geographical spread of participating pupils**



This chart shows that over half the number of pupils participating in the second pilot year were from the Greater London and Kent areas.

## Key Findings



- a Words for Work session in Greater London

This section of the report will document whether and how the outcome targets were achieved. Information was collected from young people as well as teachers and business volunteers.

In the main the results are very pleasing, given that the schools were responsible for the delivery and therefore the success or otherwise of the Words for Work project in their setting. The results from a couple of schools that failed to deliver as the project team had hoped have brought down the averages but even with these poor results, the totals are still very encouraging.

### Outcomes for Beneficiaries

#### 1) We exceeded our aim of 50% of participating pupils improving their speaking and listening skills

#### Pupil Feedback

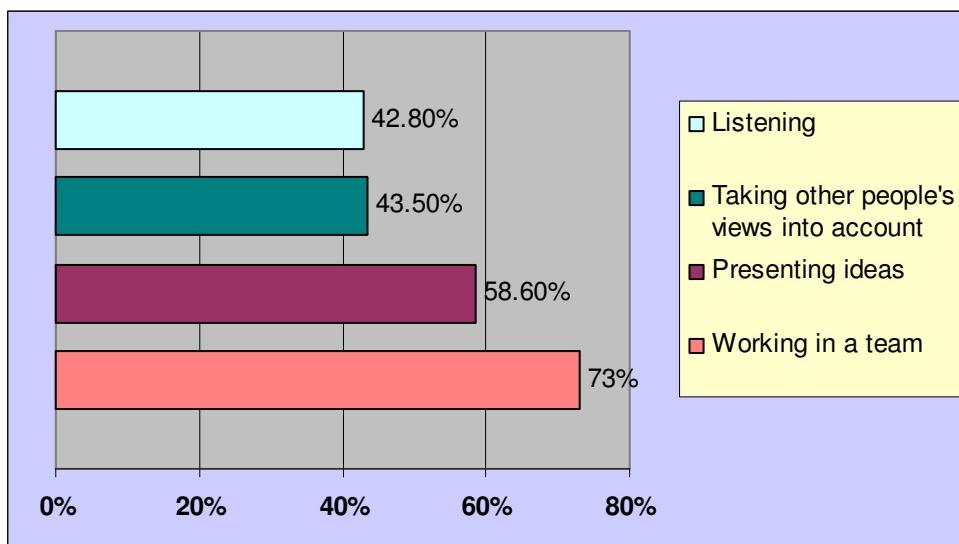
*"I've learnt how to communicate easier with different people – like people I wouldn't normally talk to. I'm not afraid anymore, like when I'm in class to stick up my hand and answer questions. I'm not afraid anymore of being wrong and stuff like that."*

Source: pupil, Stoke

Almost 7 in 10 (69.66%) young people feel that they now communicate better as a result of the Words for Work pilot. When asked what skills they have improved, 7 in 10 young people felt that they are now better at working in a team, 6 in 10 feel better at presenting ideas and 4 in 10 young people feel better at taking other people's views into account and listening.

Figure 4 illustrates that 73% of pupils feel they are better at working in a team after taking part in Words for Work.

**Figure 4) Post-project pupil responses to ‘Please choose the skills you are better at now you have taken part in Words for Work’**



*“I’ve learnt about body language, how to communicate with people I don’t know, how to discuss things. With the volunteers I was nervous at first but they’re nice. They’ve told us stuff about work and that’s interesting.”*

Source: pupil, Birmingham

The qualitative and quantitative data collected shows that almost 70% of participating pupils believe they have improved their communication skills. The interviews that the project team conducted with pupils on their observational visits provided more interesting information on pupils’ own thoughts on their improvements in speaking and listening as a result of participating on Words for Work. During these interviews the pupils were asked directly, ‘do you think you have any new skills?’ The following quotes are a sample of their responses to these questions.

*“Really good at listening and eye contact – I sit up straight and keep focussed.”*

Source: pupil, Stoke

*“I’ve learnt new communication skills and how to speak, listen and extra things on top.”*

Source: pupil, Kent

### Teacher Feedback

The teachers from pilot schools were also asked to complete a post-pilot survey. When asked whether Words for Work has impacted on pupils’ skills, 9 in 10 (87.5%) teachers felt that it had. The school that answered no to this question gave the following explanation;

*“One of my issues with the project (our end not yours) was that the skills DIDN’T change. Whether this was because of the learners, the volunteers or myself I don’t know. “*

Source: teacher, Wolverhampton

The delivery teacher has asked to deliver Words for Work again next year as he believes that this year was a learning one and the project has the potential for good impact on his students. He felt that the project could be delivered more effectively by the school to achieve this outcome more successfully.

*"The students were more confident about getting involved in discussions, talking to others and levels of performance in speaking and listening tasks improved. For some students making eye contact etc. was a massive achievement as some students are statemented with this being a target for them."*

Source: teacher, Brighton

Teachers who delivered the Words for Work project in each school were asked to complete a skill assessment on nine level 2 functional skill outcomes for a sample of pupils during the project delivery. The table below shows the results from these assessments from six schools. It is clear from these percentages that the teachers observed these skills being demonstrated in most cases and by most pupils.

**Figure 5) Collated functional skills assessment results**

Functional skill	% of pupils who demonstrated this skill
Make a range of contributions to discussions	100%
Present information and ideas clearly and persuasively to others	92%
Make choices and decisions, think creatively and act independently	92%
Listen to complex information and give a relevant response in appropriate language	95%
Engage with the world beyond the classroom	100%
Use their skills for real purposes	90%
Spend time planning and developing their work	97%
Make significant contributions to discussions, taking a range of roles and helping to move discussion forward to reach decisions	87%
Experience success in real situations as a result of using their skills effectively	87%

The teachers cited taking part in discussions and spending time planning and developing their work as the top two skills the pupils improved. According to the skill assessments almost all the young people improved in these areas. The 'making significant contributions to discussions' outcome had the joint lowest percentage at 87% so the comments made by teachers for this outcome were analysed. In the majority of cases where individual pupils were not observed demonstrating this outcome the comment made was linked to lack of confidence. Two pupils were said to be struggling to work in a group effectively.

Teachers were asked in their end-of-project questionnaire to comment on their assessment of the impact of the Words for Work project on the pupils' confidence to communicate. Below is a selection of the responses they gave which clearly show that pupils' communication skills have improved.

*"English teachers commented on an improvement in S+L levels for most of the students."*

Source: teacher, Stoke

*"We completed a 'before and after' presentation from the 4 different groups. There is video evidence of advances in the students' communication skills."*

Source: teacher, Kent

*"Allowing learners to take time to consider communication in all its forms had been very important. Our learners were the most able and take literacy for granted; to extend this literacy into other methods of communication was eye opening to them."*

Source: teacher, Wolverhampton

*"The impact on students' confidence to communicate has been fantastic. This has been demonstrated through conversations around school and the way they approach adults. There is one young lady who had very little confidence to talk to anyone before the project but now has regular conversations with staff."*

Source: teacher, Stoke

A significant element of teacher comments highlights the changes in behaviour of the Words for Work pupils fed back by other teachers around the school. These comments denote the long-term changes to pupil's speaking and listening skills that participation in Words for Work can bring about.

## Volunteer Feedback

*"Pupils have developed their listening skills and confidence in expressing themselves more clearly. One group member is really good at expressing herself and at the beginning was acting as a mediator between a very over-confident, over-bearing group member to the quieter one. She's not doing that so much now because the other two have learnt more skills in being more confident."*

Source: volunteer, Greater London

Another important source of observational evidence is the business volunteers who worked closely with the participating pupils during the second phase of the Words for Work programme. The business volunteers were also asked to complete a post-pilot survey. Their responses further corroborate that young people are now better equipped to communicate than they had been before the project, with 9 in 10 (93.3%) volunteers believing that young people learned to communicate better. 9 in 10 (86.7%) volunteers felt that the pupils had most improved in their ability to present ideas, and 8 in 10 (82.2%) felt that pupils' team work had improved.

Similar to the pupils, the volunteers that were interviewed during observational visits were asked directly, 'Do you think the pupils have acquired new skills?'

The following quotes are a sample of their responses to these questions.

*"Yes – people skills, communication skills and understanding a bit about the business world."*

Source: volunteer, Kent

*"I think it was all about working as a team and communicating – identifying roles, identifying people's skills and putting those to best use. I think they did develop and come into their own so hopefully they'll just move forward from here."*

Source: volunteer, Wolverhampton

## **2) We have almost matched our aim that 75% of participating pupils raise their awareness of the importance of these skills in the workplace**

### **Pupil Feedback**

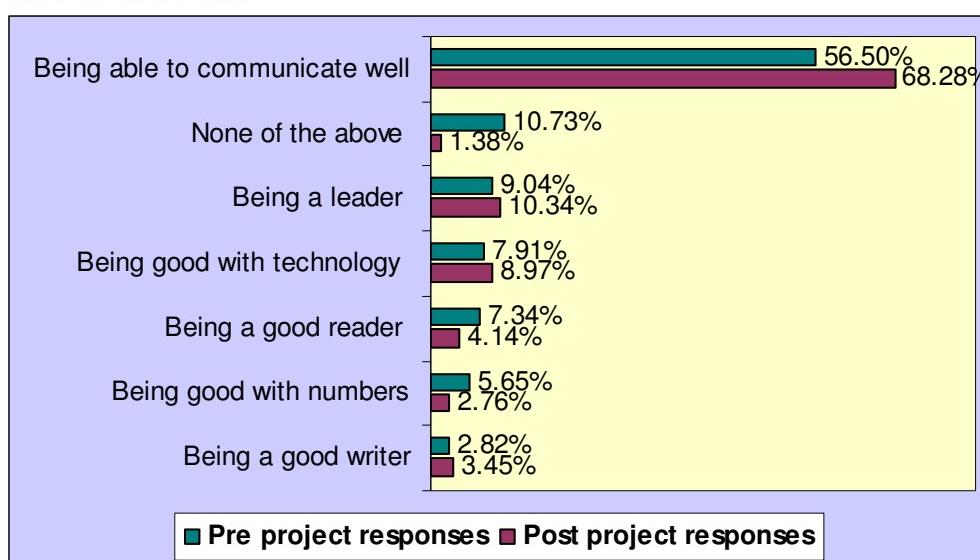
*"I knew that communication was important but I didn't take it seriously now I do and I know how it can affect me in the future. You should know how to listen to others and respect their opinions. I've improved much more in a team."*

Source: pupil, Greater London

The results from the post-project surveys show that almost 7 in 10 pupils agree that communication is the most important skill for work. This is compared to 6 in 10 pupils before the Words for Work project started. These statistics indicate that this outcome target was almost met. Issues that contributed to the target not quite being met can be found in the Lessons Learned section of this document.

The graph, figure 6, demonstrates the change in attitudes amongst pupils of what is important in the workplace, seeing 'being able to communicate well' as the top answer in both instances, but with a 9% increase in this being chosen after the project was completed. It is also pleasing to see the 10% decrease in 'none of the above', suggesting pupils developed more of an awareness of what skills they perceive as important in the workplace.

**Figure 6) Pre and post-project pupil 'I strongly agree' and 'I agree' responses to the question 'Pick a skill from the following list which you think is most important at work'**



*"Yeah – when I'm older and get a job it'll help me listen to others and communicate more with the quieter people. Since doing this, the quiet and shy people are talking more."*

Source: pupil, Kent

Responses that pupils gave to other questions in the surveys indicate that the outcome target was met and exceeded. For example, pupils were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed with communication skills being important skills to have. 9 in 10 young people agreed or strongly agreed that good communication skills are some of the most important skills to have (94.4%), important to get a job (92.4%) and necessary for succeeding in job interviews (90.34%).

It was clear from interviews conducted with the young people involved that they had discovered the importance of communication in the world of work from their volunteers and this had changed their perceptions of its importance to their own employability.

*"We've learnt about using confidence and body language and stuff like that in different places. When I want to have a job interview, I will be able to use this stuff when I want to get a job."*

Source: pupil, Stoke

### **Teacher Feedback**

Teachers stated how positive it was for the pupils to spend time with the business volunteers and how this really helped to change their perceptions of the importance of communication at work.

*"Having so many positive male role models was fantastic; they really took the boys in the group under their wings and supported them to prepare their work and to talk to them about expected behaviour in the work place. They modelled positive behaviour and relationships."*

Source: teacher, Brighton

*"The pupils really enjoyed working with the volunteers and finding out how they had risen to success. It gave them career guidance as well as re-iterated good communication skills."*

Source: teacher, Kent

### **Volunteer Feedback**

*"It's about giving pupils the tools to help them make that successful transition from being a child and an adult and being in the real world...it's teaching them life skills."*

Source: volunteer, Greater London

It was clear from observation visits that the young people were becoming far more aware of the importance of communication skills at work, particularly as they found out more and more information about the workplace from talking to the volunteers. Some of the volunteers expressed shock at how little the young people had known about the world of work when they first met and how quickly they were learning about it from taking part in Words for Work.

*"It was very satisfying to share work based stories to try to bring the Words for Work elements into context for them."*

Source: volunteer, Wolverhampton

The results from the volunteer post-project surveys indicate that in the main this outcome was met and, in some cases, exceeded. Almost all (97.2%) agreed that after participating in the project young people see communication skills as important for work, 7 in 10 (71.1%) agreed that young people think about their future careers and 9 in 10 (91.3%) agreed that young people now think about communication skills more than before. The volunteers were asked several questions about the pupils' perceptions and answered:

*"I think it's very important to give them a perspective on the real world of work."*

Source: volunteer, Stoke

*"I think it's important that people like myself who work in a professional environment engage with young people, share experience and find some common ground."*

Source: volunteer, Stoke

### **3) We increased self esteem and confidence of the participating pupils in the context of speaking and listening**

#### **Pupil feedback**

*"I am more confident at communicating now. It was weird and difficult to start with. I was nervous when I met the volunteers but they are cool, the way they help us and talk to us. I'm learning from them."*

Source: pupil, Birmingham

Putting young people into a situation which allows them to feel more confident about themselves and their abilities will always be a positive thing and lead to positive outcomes for those young people. Increased confidence leads to increased engagement in activities and this helps the young people to get the most that they can out of Words for Work. This is why this outcome is key to the success of the project.

A significant number of the pupils that took part in Words for Work this year started the project with low self esteem and low confidence. The changes to confidence that occurred in many of the schools during the course of the project were significant and very positive for the future of these pupils.

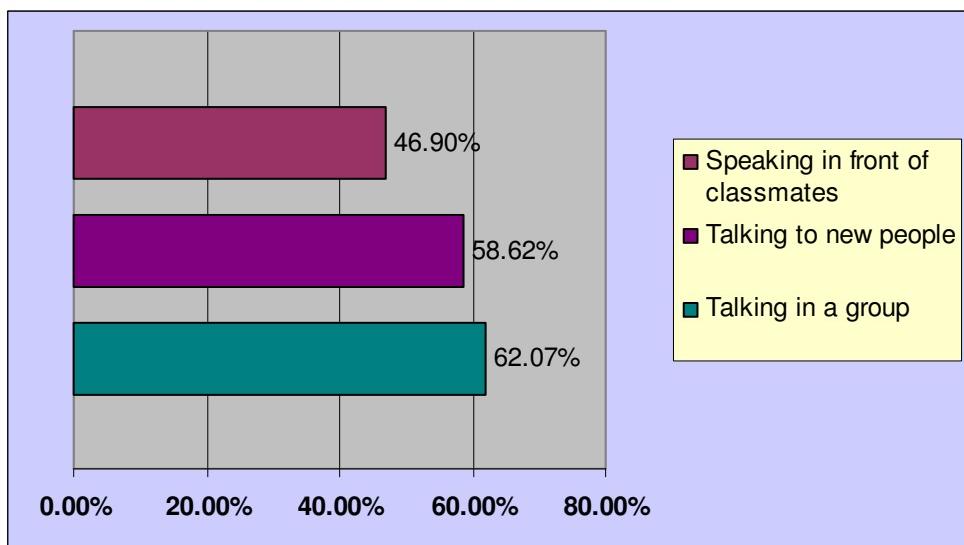
*"I'm not afraid anymore, like when I'm in class to stick up my hand and answer questions. I'm not afraid anymore of being wrong and stuff like that."*

Source: pupil, Stoke

In the post-project pupil survey the young people were asked which skills they felt more confident in as a result of Words for Work. 6 in 10 stated they now feel more confident talking to new people and talking in group, while 5 in 10 young people now feel more confident speaking in front of classmates. Three choices were offered and they were able to choose as many as they felt applied to them.

Figure 7 shows that pupils believed the main skills they had developed more confidence in were talking to new people and talking in a group.

**Figure 7) Post-project pupil responses to ‘Which of the skills do you feel you are more confident in? (please choose all that apply)’**



This compares with 3 in 10 (31.07%) agreeing they were confident in talking in a group before the project, and 2 in 10 agreeing they were confident in talking to new people and speaking in front of classmates (22.60% and 19.21%).

The changes in these percentages clearly show how the young people who participated on Words for Work across all the schools involved increased their confidence in the context of speaking and listening.

*“I feel more confident in speaking to people.”*

Source: pupil, Kent

Most telling of all is the comments made by the young people themselves, particularly those that reveal how low their confidence was before they embarked on Words for Work:

*“From the start I was a shy person but like to be shy is ok but I need to say me answer out loud. Other teachers said I put my hand up more now and speak out in class.”*

Source: pupil, Stoke

### Teacher Feedback

Teachers were really impressed with how the pupils’ confidence levels increased as the project progressed. This came as a surprise to some.

*“The achievements of students on our pilot ‘Words for Work’ project in terms of self esteem, confidence and most of all their growth in emotional understanding of each other to facilitate communication amongst themselves and the business volunteers was quite extraordinary. Volunteers’ perceptions were of young people drastically changed in some cases. The young people saw the relevance of literacy in the real sense, and can now start to apply this within the school curriculum.”*

Source: teacher, Birmingham

*"The confidence levels of students trebled throughout the project. The change was unbelievable."*

Source: teacher, Darwen

*"The volunteers were seen as 'real people' and helped to deliver a message that I may not have been able to show as well. Students thrived in working with the volunteers and this led to an increase in confidence."*

Source: teacher, Stoke

*"The impact on students' confidence to communicate has been fantastic. This has been demonstrated through conversations around school and the way they approach adults. Certain students have benefited more than others; there is one young lady who had very little confidence to talk to anyone before the project but now has regular conversations with staff."*

Source: teacher, Stoke

### **Volunteer Feedback**

*"It has been very rewarding working with the group of students from Bishop David Brown - particularly seeing their skills and confidence grow."*

Source: volunteer, Greater London

6 in 10 (64.4%) volunteers believe that the young people felt more confident since taking part in Words for Work.

*"I feel very proud of what the students have achieved and saw real improvements in their communication and confidence levels."*

Source: volunteer, Stoke

The volunteers also commented on the increase in confidence of the young people they worked with and the direct relation it had to the increase in their communication skills is evident from these quotes.

*"Pupils have developed their listening skills and confidence in expressing themselves more clearly."*

Source: volunteer, Greater London

### **4) We engaged volunteers to work with local schools**

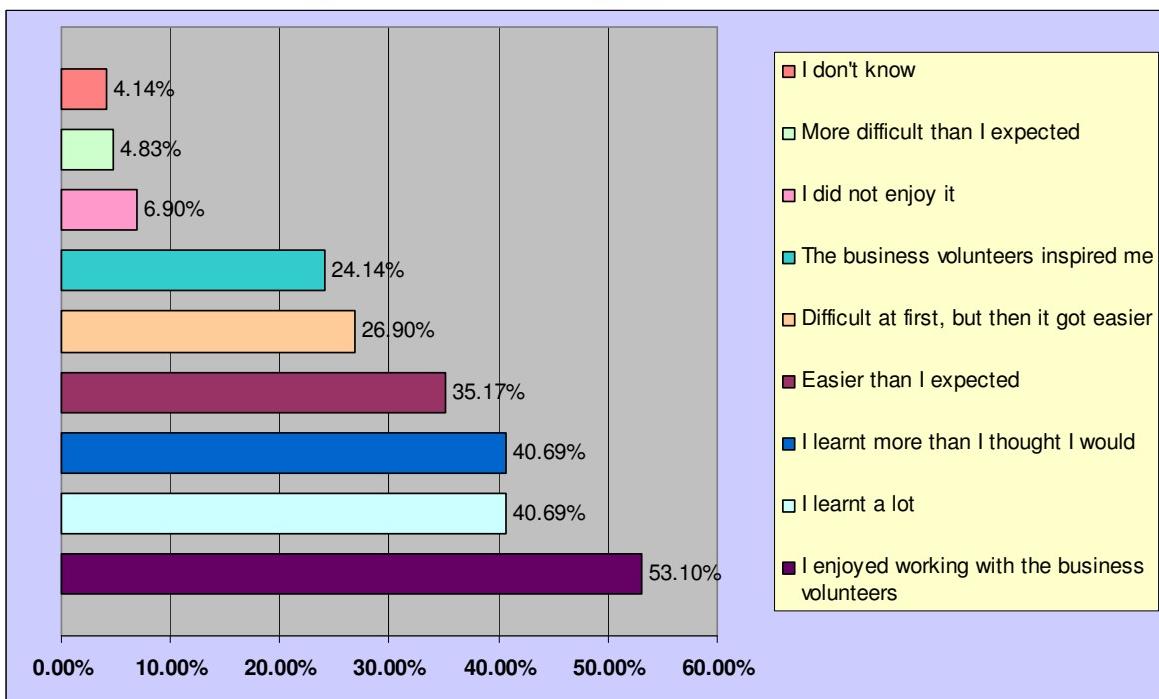
Volunteers are the backbone of Words for Work, providing young people with opportunities to discover more about life beyond school. In addition to supporting the young participants, the role was designed to enable volunteers to increase their own skills, confidence, and experience of work. No specific outcomes for the volunteers were set before the project, but through the development of the project it was hoped the volunteers would be able to:

- use their experience in the workplace to inspire young people
- enhance their professional development, bringing satisfaction to both their professional and personal lives
- develop their own communication and facilitation skills
- challenge themselves to work outside their comfort zone to motivate young people in a supervised environment
- to see young people develop new skills under their facilitation

## Pupil Feedback

5 in 10 pupils enjoyed working with the business volunteers and 4 in 10 learnt more than they thought they would. These figures are pleasing, and also suggest that in future Words for Work developments, there should be perhaps a more thorough volunteer recruitment process to ensure volunteers possess certain skills as well as enthusiasm and desire to be involved.

**Figure 8) Pupil responses to ‘How was your experience working with the business volunteers? (please tick all that apply)’**



The most popular choices, as illustrated in the graph were ‘I enjoyed working with the business volunteers’, ‘I learnt more than I thought I would’ and ‘I learnt a lot.’

A question on the post-project survey read: ‘Since Words for Work, have your views changed about what you want to do when you are older?’

Pupil responses often indicate that the volunteers had influenced their thoughts and hopes about the future, suggesting that the volunteers were positive role models who inspired and instilled confidence and ambition in the young people they worked with:

*“I've always wanted to be a lawyer, that involves a lot of communication skills, to be able to talk to your client and fight for them. Words for Work has only made me stronger! It hasn't changed my future career.”*

Source: pupil, Greater London

*“I still want to work in film. Words for Work has upped my confidence though, and taught me how to speak well in a job interview.”*

Source: pupil, Lancashire

*“I did want to be a lawyer then I started words for work - the volunteers came and I saw the nurse so I now want to be a doctor”*

Source: pupil, West Midlands

*"I always wanted to be a vet but always thought I wouldn't be able to because I wouldn't be able to comfort the people if say their animal had to be put down but doing words for work I have learnt to listen well and respect others opinion."*

Source: pupil, Stoke

*"I want to be a manger of GSK."*

Source: pupil, Greater London

### **Teacher Feedback**

Teachers were overwhelmingly positive about the role of volunteers in the project. Issues to do with volunteer attendance and recruitment can be found in the Lessons Learned section. Teachers commented on the roles of volunteers as positive role models, enabling young people to act in different ways to earn respect of their volunteer colleagues:

*"Benefits of having volunteers working with pupils were: positive male role models, seeing adults in a positive light, 1:1 support for students in preparing tasks, being spoken to etc, confidence building with support in delivering individual presentations in front of an audience. Volunteers explain[ed] what would happen if an inappropriate comment, form of behaviour was displayed and what consequences would be at work."*

Source: teacher, Brighton

*The volunteers were fantastic and were really good with the students. It was lovely for me to be able to take a back seat in the sessions and watch relationships develop.*

Source: teacher, Stoke

*"The group of business volunteers were so proactive they were a dream to work with, due to business constraints some volunteers missed the odd session but sent a prepared replacement which made my life so much easier. The volunteers were a lovely bunch of people and have asked to be signed up for next year's project and have also offered to support other school projects.'* Source: teacher, Lancashire

*"The volunteers provided a different kind of adult and a different take on the idea of a role model for the learners. They were able to operate less as instructors and more as colleagues in their own right."*

Source: teacher, West Midlands

*"The pupils really enjoyed working with the volunteers and finding out how they had risen to success. The volunteers were extremely professional and very down to earth. They had a wonderful friendly approach with the pupils and made them feel safe and confident."*

Source: teacher, Kent

## **Volunteer Feedback**

*"I was surprised by how much we all learned during the process (business volunteers and students) about teamwork, patience, resilience and how to have fun whilst getting something useful done."*

Source: volunteer, Greater London

9 in 10 (87%) volunteers stated that their experience of Words for Work was 'very positive' or 'sometimes positive.' Relating to this, 8 in 10 (78.3%) volunteers said they would go back to the school they volunteered at, with only 3 respondents stating that they would not consider going back to the school they volunteered at.

*"The project has helped me to realise how important getting involved within the community is and I am keen to start another project. I feel very proud of what the students have achieved and saw real improvements in their communication and confidence levels. I feel from my experience that the project is very effective and I can see the real importance of helping the students to develop their communication ready for when they leave school, no matter what career path they may take. I wish I would have had this opportunity whilst I was at school to prepare myself for when I went into the 'real' world. Including business volunteers is a very important part of the project as many of the students might come from challenging backgrounds, perhaps with no role model to look up to, and if we as business volunteers can go along and help these young individuals to become more confident in themselves and their communication which could positively impact upon their motivation and excitement about their futures, then it's worth every moment that we give up of our working time to help."*

Source: volunteer, Stoke

*"It was good to get out of the office and do something completely different."*

Source: volunteer, Greater London

*"I learnt a lot about letting others take on responsibility for leading and driving a project and developing their ideas. I usually take on a leadership role for group tasks, so it was good for me to step aside and undertake a different role."*

Source: volunteer, Greater London

*"I feel that I learned how to more efficiently facilitate learning in others, and how to better harmonise diverse working groups."*

Source: volunteer, Lancashire

*"The younger elements of our society (both locally and in the wider community) can be marginalised by lack of interest, and our input is required to help become both productive and positive."*

Source: volunteer, Lancashire

*"Words for Work has shown me additional methods that can be used when facilitating and keeping the group engaged."*

Source: volunteer, Greater London

*"Wish I had this at school when I was there."*

Source: volunteer, Greater London

9 in 10 (91.3%) volunteers answered that they were supported (either 'a lot' or 'a little') by their company whilst volunteering, an excellent indicator for the future of

Words for Work. Only 6 in 10 (59.3%) volunteers stated their organisation had a volunteering policy before the project commenced, with almost 4 in 10 (37%) saying they were unsure of whether their organisation had a volunteering policy.

9 in 10 (93.5%) volunteers stated that they 'built successful relationships with the young people', which is an incredibly positive statistic. The volunteer training session which every volunteer attended before their involvement, was referenced by the volunteers as being a useful tool in helping them to learn from their experience. Volunteers commented on the fact they had benefitted and learnt from the experience as well as contributing towards the development of the young people's skills:

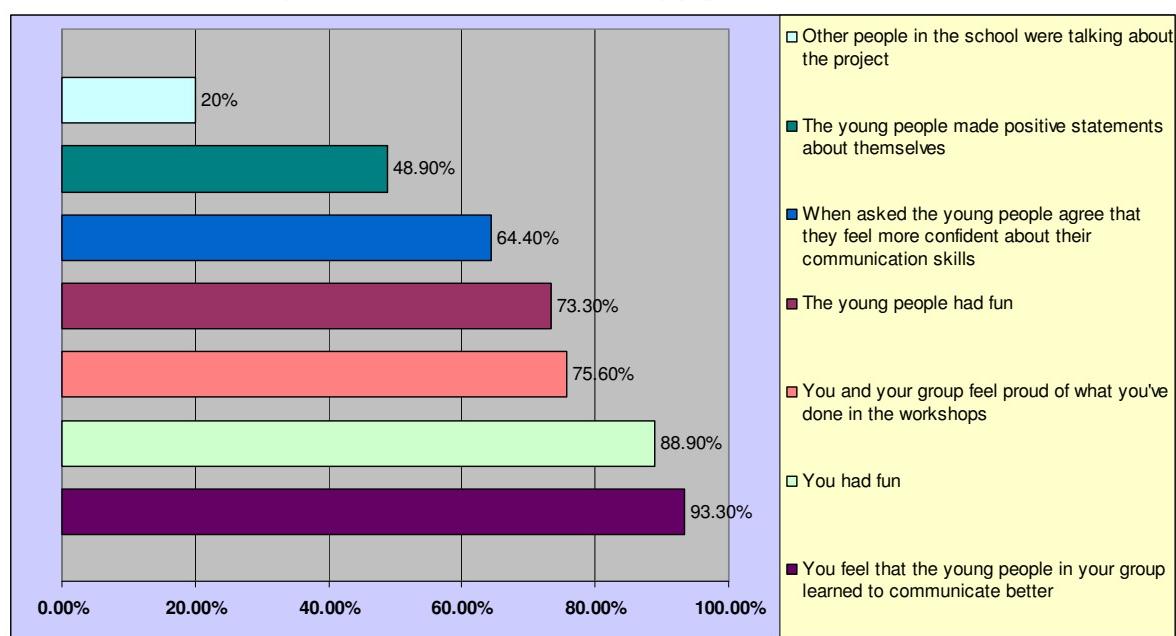
*"I think the project has taught me the importance of taking a step back in the workplace and evaluating the circumstances and options before suggesting ways to resolve issues/projects."*

Source: volunteer, Stoke

*"I have gained confidence in my facilitation skills through taking part in the Words for Work - by having to be more adaptable to the audience and being more creative as many young people are visual learners."*

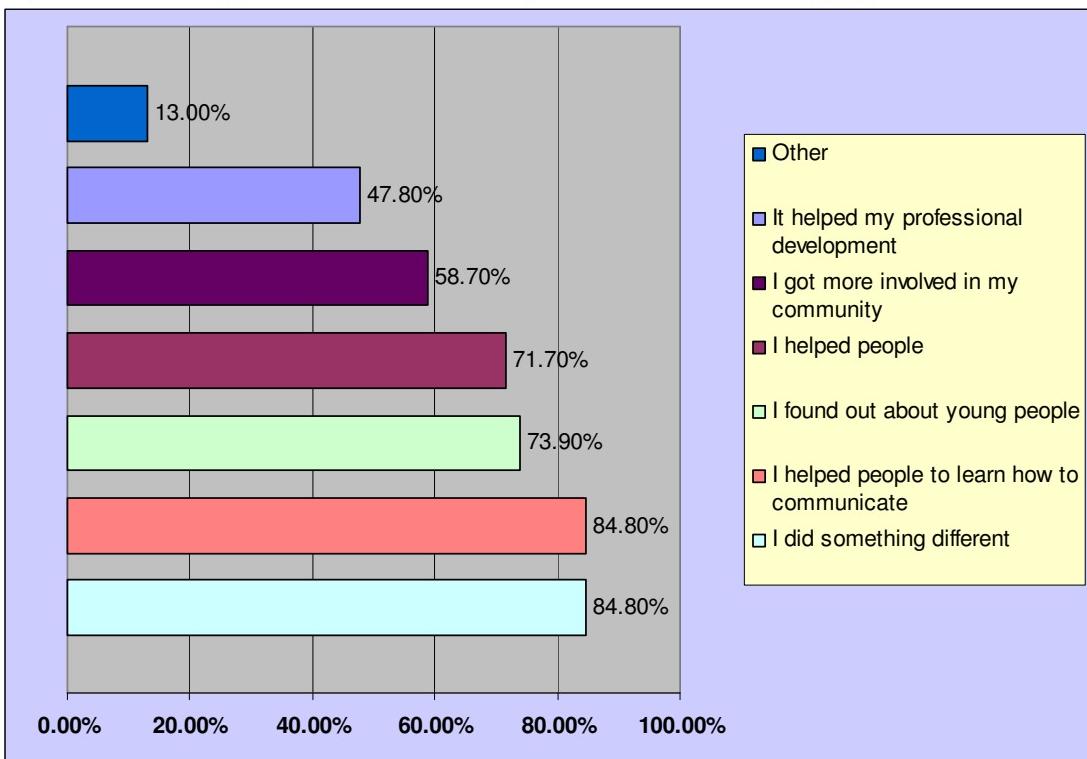
Source: volunteer, Stoke

**Figure 9) Responses to 'Which of the following, if any, were achieved through the Words for Work pilot? (Please tick all that apply)'**



This chart represents the viewpoints of volunteers in relation to the achievements of Words for Work. The two most popular viewpoints were that 9 in 10 volunteers had fun, and 9 in 10 volunteers believed the young people they were working with learnt to communicate better.

**Figure 10) Volunteer responses to the question ‘Which of these did you experience through Words for Work? (please tick all that apply)’**



It is pleasing to see that 8 in 10 volunteers felt they helped people learn to communicate and did something different.

### School Related Outcome

#### a) We increased awareness of the importance of speaking and listening and its applicability to their subject areas amongst teachers in the participating schools

The two-year Words for Work pilot has shown that this outcome is achievable but not in the short term. Raising the profile of the project and of the importance of speaking and listening amongst staff and pupils not directly involved in Words for Work is something that will take time to achieve. This outcome cannot be measured in one or even two years. As the project becomes imbedded in year 9 and as those students move up through the school, the rest of the school will realise the impact it has on the young people who participate and this will in turn increase awareness of the importance of speaking and listening amongst the wider school community.

Feedback from teachers documented in this report indicates that staff around the school were noticing and commenting on the changes to pupils' speaking and listening skills and confidence outside the project. This is an important factor to achieving the desired outcome of raised awareness in the wider school community.

The activities organised by the first year pilot schools did generate interest and raise awareness among the student population, particularly the new Year 9 pupils. Both schools held 'exhibitions' of the work the pupils had done and organised assemblies which the participants led. In addition in one school a selection of previous Words for

Work students talked to the new cohort of pupils who were going to take part this year before the project began.

Both schools commented that these activities didn't generate the awareness amongst other staff that they had hoped. Both schools were surprised at how hard it has proved to engage staff from other subject areas in a meaningful way. However something that did generate interest among certain staff was the performance of the Words for Work pupils from the first year when they did interviews for prefect positions towards the end of year 10. The interview panel was very impressed with the standard of interviews of these students. All those who applied from the Words for Work cohort got a prefect position. When they were asked to assess their performance all these pupils talked about the project and how it had impacted on their confidence and their interview skills.

In order to tackle this issue of general lack of awareness of the importance of speaking and listening among the main body of teaching staff, the Project Manager developed a generic speaking and listening tool which can be used in schools. In consultation with a group of secondary teachers a Speaking and Listening Audit was written. This now sits online on the National Literacy Trust's Schools Network. Schools can complete the audit and will then be sent comprehensive advice according to the stage they are at with their speaking and listening practice and attitudes. The advice is very practical and there are resources available alongside it that schools can use to improve their practice and to train staff. A Speaking and Listening Strategy Workshop is also available for schools to buy. This is aimed at senior managers and key teachers and is tailored to individual schools based on their audit results. It is hoped that these tools will help to achieve this outcome more fully in the future.

## Lessons Learned



- A Words for Work volunteer and pupil, Greater London

As stated in the Evaluation Methodology section, the second-year-pilot evaluation had two main strands:

- To measure the impact for beneficiaries
- To assess the feasibility of schools delivering the project themselves

The analysis of the evaluation data collected, the observation visits and the records of project management were carried out to answer these three fundamental questions:

1. Did the project successfully impact on pupils' speaking and listening skills?
2. Did the schools deliver Words for Work to an acceptable standard?
3. Were the National Literacy Trust project team able to give enough and the right support to schools and volunteers?

Clearly questions one and two are linked because the quality of delivery in each school inevitably affected the impact on the pupils' skills and their increase in confidence.

The evaluation shows that overall the project did successfully impact on pupils' speaking and listening skills and other associated outcomes detailed in the Key Findings section above. Further analysis of the data collected reveals that in eight schools the project was delivered well and the impact was high. In three schools the project was not delivered well and the impact was clearly lower. Why was this the case and what lessons can be learned from this experience?

### **a) School Issues**

Those three schools that performed poorly and did not meet the expected standard for delivery of Words for Work shared some common issues. None of the schools had all these issues but some had more than one:

- The enthusiasm of the delivery teacher was not backed up by the right level of support from the senior management of the schools
- The delivery teacher failed to engage with the Words for Work resource properly which meant that they missed vital set up guidance and did not prepare adequately for the workshops
- The school lacked the ability to communicate efficiently with the National Literacy Trust project team either by email or telephone
- The school found it difficult to know how to treat their volunteers
- The volunteers were unreliable and the number at each workshop was below the minimum level for the groups

The question is how can we learn from these issues and what can be done to mitigate them in the future. Looking at the points laid out above it seems clear that in the instances where the project failed or struggled to deliver the desired outcomes to beneficiaries, the main stumbling block was the ability of the school to engage with Words for Work in sufficient depth before and during the delivery phases. It seems that even if schools recognise the value of the Words for Work project for their pupils and have the desire to run it, they may lack the organisational and communication skills to run it successfully without intensive training and support. The resource pack alone was not always sufficient for schools to manage and deliver the project successfully.

It is therefore important, in order to ensure that the quality of the Words for Work project in schools is good, that the regional managers operating Words for Work hubs have sufficient understanding of these issues and adequate training in order to support the schools to make the most of Words for Work.

### **b) Support from a Senior Level in the School**

Efforts were made at the start of the year to engage the head teachers from all the schools in the Words for Work project. When the initial briefing meetings were held it was stressed to the teachers that they needed to inform the head and ensure that they were on board. Most schools managed to do this and the Project Manager followed up with email or face to face contact. Where the delivery teacher failed to engage the head they found themselves not adequately supported and struggled to manage and deliver the project well. In these cases issues arose around cover for teachers, timetabling changes and management of communication with volunteers. The issue of communication with the volunteers was highlighted in some of the post-project surveys.

*“Other staff in the staff room could have been more friendly and we never saw the head teacher or a member of the senior leadership team during our visit.”*  
Source: volunteer, Stoke

Conversely, in schools where the head was fully engaged and the teachers were well supported the feedback from the volunteers was glowing.

*"Excellent. I was overwhelmed by the sense of mutual respect between the students and teachers and the genuine commitment the staff had to creating a positive environment for students - for whatever background or educational ability."*

Source: volunteer, Greater London

In future it seems that making sure the head and senior staff are engaged and supportive of Words for Work is something that needs to be a top priority at the outset of the relationship with every participating school.

### c) Engaging with the Words for Work Resource

The Words for Work resource pack for schools was divided into four sections:

1. Notes and guidance for schools
  2. Lesson plans and resources
  3. Skill assessments
  4. Evaluation toolkit
1. The notes and guidance for schools were written to provide a comprehensive resource for setting up, managing and delivering Words for Work. Included in this section was advice on recruiting and managing relationships with business volunteers; guidance on timetabling and preparing for delivering the Words for Work programme; delivery notes for every workshop; resources to support set up, including permission letters, press releases, delivery timetables etc.
  2. This section provided all the activities from the first pilot year formatted into lesson plans with resource lists, national curriculum learning objectives, notes for teachers, timings and accompanying resources to use.
  3. Section three contained skill assessment forms for individual pupils and guidance notes on using them during the Words for Work programme. The assessments included learning objectives from the KS3 national curriculum; national strategies and functional skills.
  4. This section contained a comprehensive evaluation toolkit and detailed instructions on how and when to use each evaluation tool to measure the impact of the Words for Work programme.

Once the Words for Work resource pack for schools was compiled and completed, it was loaded onto the web site in a password-protected zone to be made available for second pilot year schools to download.

The issue of lack of engagement with the resource was a surprise to the project team. At no stage of the strategic development was it expected that teachers would not download and thoroughly read the resource at the beginning of the project. However this happened in three schools and the results of this became clear as the delivery of phase one commenced and later through the observational visits that the project team made.

The Project Manager had to make visits to three schools and spend considerable time with the delivery teachers going through the resource and giving advice on the lesson plans for the workshops in both phases. It was clear from these visits that the teachers had not read the guidance notes in the first section of the resource and had therefore not done the important planning and timetabling required to facilitate the

smooth running of the project. They had not booked rooms or equipment. The effect of this on the project was noted by the volunteers involved.

*“Unfortunately, there were some organisational issues at the school in terms of resources and equipment, which had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the project - in my opinion.”*

Source: volunteer, Kent

In addition some teachers had not looked at the section on the management of their volunteers and were failing to communicate the necessary information to them prior to their start. One important instruction that these three schools had missed was to arrange a visit to the school for the volunteers prior to starting the project. Again this was flagged up in the volunteer post-project surveys.

*“There could have been more communication between the teacher and the business volunteers prior to the sessions to get the best value - it was left until we were in class to understand what was going on.”*

Source: volunteer, Stoke

In one school the Words for Work Project Manager worked with the teacher to redesign the resources in phase two because they had embarked on delivery without looking through the resource properly and soon discovered that their lack of preparation, even down to timetabling the sessions for only an hour and ten minutes rather than two, meant that the workshops as they stood were undeliverable.

In another school the teacher assumed that the business volunteers would come in and bring the resources for the workshops and run them themselves. As a result the volunteers arrived on the first day to find there was no plan for the session, no resources and the teacher expected them to do it all. After a visit from the Project Manager the teacher was shown the resource and quickly saw that they were supposed to be facilitating and running it and the rest of the workshops were planned and prepared for properly. It was very clear that the teacher had not read the simple instructions at the beginning of the phase two workshop plans!

It is clear from these experiences that the delivery teachers in these schools needed a face-to-face workshop which involved going through the resource step-by-step to make sure that they understood the tasks and preparation involved for the Words for Work project prior to embarking on delivery. This would lessen the amount of ongoing support needed during the project life. Again this will be a top priority for the future strategic development of the Words for Work project.

#### **d) Communication with and between Partners**

From the start of the second year of Words for Work there were issues with the level of communication between the central project team and some of the participating schools. In some cases the lack of response either by email or by direct telephoning was extremely frustrating and made it very difficult for the project team to monitor schools' set up and planning progress. A lot of time was spent in the first three months of the second pilot year chasing some schools for responses to the requests for information and updates on task completion that were being sent out. Schools and businesses that received a Partnership Agreement from Words for Work sent them back to the project team between one week and four months after receiving them.

Teachers are very busy and have short periods of time during the day when they can access their emails or take phone calls. The project team was aware of this and knew that their strategy would be to coax and encourage schools to meet the deadlines they were set and to inform them of progress and any problems arising during the project. The tone of the communication being sent was encouraging and full of offers to help and support teachers in the work they were doing for Words for Work. In most cases a line of communication was set up successfully between the central team and the schools, even though this took time to establish. However a few schools never managed to develop that line and all the way through the project the central team had to push and work very hard to get any information from them at all. This issue had an impact on the project team's capacity and affected the amount of evaluation data that was collected during and after project completion.

It is clear that the importance of evaluation is something that schools need to understand and buy into more fully. This should be a key strand of the training that schools receive prior to the start of the Words for Work project in their setting. On average most schools had to be sent each survey link between two and four times. Some schools failed to do the surveys at all despite this input from the project team.

#### e) Volunteers

Learning about the world of work and the importance of communication skills in the context of employment did not rely on the school delivery as this came from the volunteers. Such was the impact of having outside people coming in and working among the young people that even in the schools where delivery was not particularly good or organised the pupils gained this outcome.

However the process of recruiting, managing and communicating with the volunteers for Words for Work is time consuming. It requires an understanding of the difference between the world of education settings and the world of commercial workplace settings. Some of the schools found this aspect of the project difficult to achieve. These tended to be the same schools that struggled to communicate well with the central project team and clearly had a culture of poor communication throughout their setting.

One of the main ways that schools showed they lacked awareness of the world of work was in the changes that were made, sometimes at the last minute, to the timetabled dates of the workshops in phase two. Seven schools changed the workshop dates during the course of phase two and this had an obvious effect on the volunteer's attendance.

*"Unfortunately I was only able to attend two sessions as the dates were moved. I therefore feel I didn't manage to build a relationship with the students which would have been helpful."*

Source: volunteer, Stoke

Conversely in some cases it was the volunteers who failed to meet the commitment that the Words for Work project required. In one school in particular the volunteer attendance rate was very poor. Three people dropped out midway through the workshops and three others attended less than half of the sessions. At no session were all the volunteers present and this presented a big challenge to the teacher. It also gave the pupils involved a negative view of the volunteers:

*"They didn't teach me much as they were barely here."*

Source: pupil, London

These volunteers came from the same organisation and it had a clash of priorities. The CSR lead was very keen for the firm to participate in a volunteering programme but it became clear as the project progressed that the culture amongst staff was that taking time out to volunteer was frowned upon by managers. Any company that is being approached for a group of volunteers should be supported to ensure that endorsement from a senior management level is secured prior to individuals being recruited.

Any project that involves intensive use of volunteers needs to weigh up the benefits to participants against the risk involved in dealing with people's commitment to a voluntary programme. In most cases it is fair to say that the better the volunteers are treated the higher the percentage that will commit fully to the project. Good treatment involves:

- good levels of communication with the setting,
- acknowledgement of their role by senior management level,
- good planning,
- an effective feedback system in place for them to use.

In addition taking the Words for Work project forward there is clearly a need to adapt the resources to create a more flexible programme of volunteer involvement. This involves redesigning the project so that it requires a smaller number of people committing to the intensive face to face time with pupils. Shifting some activities to remote interaction, by email and video conferencing, will help to mitigate the issues of volunteer drop out and non attendance. However it still remains vital that the settings hosting Words for Work are able to meet the management requirements laid out above to ensure that the volunteers stay engaged with the project and feel that their role is appreciated and worthwhile. This is another key aspect of the training that schools require prior to taking on the delivery of Words for Work.

The number of volunteers who filled in the pre and post-project surveys was disappointingly low. Why? It is clear that evaluation was not discussed with the volunteers by the schools who did not see the collection of evaluation from volunteers as part of their role. This meant that the central project team was providing the only reminder to the volunteers to complete the surveys and this message did not seem to get through well enough. Even in situations where the majority of volunteers came from the same business and had a co-ordinator in place, the number of surveys completed was low. Two suppositions could be drawn from this:

1. volunteers give their time to go into the school but are not so willing to spend time on 'paperwork'
2. the importance of evaluation is not generally understood or acknowledged

## Budget

<b>Words for Work Budget and Expenditure August 2010-August 2011</b>		
<b>Budget line</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
CORPORATES		
UBS		£3,105.00
TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS		
Paul Hamlyn Foundation		£54,587.00
Wates Foundation		£25,000.00
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>		<b>£82,692.00</b>
Cost recovery @ 15%		£12,403.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£70,289.00</b>
Carry forward from 2009/10 grant		£2,658.76
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>£72,947.76</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
SALARIES		
Project Manager		£37,080.00
Project Officer @ 3 days a week @ £23,000		£13,800.00
On costs		£9,331.91
CONSULTANCY & CASUAL		£240.58
RECRUITMENT		£0.00
EMAIL/NEWSLETTERS		£284.53
OFFICE COSTS		£497.05
Photocopying		£190.35
POST		£17.64
STATIONERY		£0.00
GRANTS (inc. books)		£0.00
TRAVEL		£2,288.86
Expenses		£569.30
STAFF DEVELOPMENT		£0.00
MARKETING & PUBLICATIONS	Includes production of the WFW resource pack	£6,450.52
PR AND EVENTS		£225.50
DATABASE		£0.00
WEB		£800.00
BOOKS, SUBSCRIPTIONS, MEMBERSHIPS		£0.00
MISCELLANEOUS		£0.00
DEVELOPMENT		£0.00
EVALUATION		£1,000.00
Contingency		£0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£72,776.24</b>
Surplus/Shortfall	Surplus	£171.52

## Next Steps

One of the outcomes for Words for Work was to secure transitional funding to develop a sustainable model for Words for Work to continue beyond the two-year pilot. During the course of the second pilot year the project team worked very hard to secure transitional funding for the Words for Work project. A number of different strategies were employed:

- The production of the Words for Work resource into a printed pack which was made available for schools to buy at a cost of £180
- The development of additional speaking and listening resources that schools could buy, a speaking and listening audit followed by a training workshop for £850
- Making applications to other Trusts and Foundations for further income
- Developing relationships with corporates which could lead to discussions on creating sponsored involvement in Words for Work.

Economic circumstances have made the success of all these areas more limited than we had hoped at the outset. We have had some sales from the resource and the training but they are not yet large enough to cover any significant project costs. We won a grant from the Wates Foundation for the second year of the project and we are currently in conversation with them about future funding of the project. We have secured a grant of £25,000 from the Equitable Charitable Trust to support the next year of Words for Work.

We have developed some good relationships with corporates during the course of the year but as yet only two of these have translated into financial support for the project, again at a modest level. Everyone that we have talked to is very interested in Words for Work and can see the benefits of the project to the young people involved. Companies are keen to take part in volunteering programmes, but are less keen to give money.

During the course of the second year it became clear that in order to sustain and continue Words for Work beyond the two year pilot a new model needed to be developed. This new model focuses on engaging regional hubs to manage the project in local schools. The central Words for Work team will provide training and resources for the hubs to enable them to do this. In addition the team will quality assure delivery and conduct an evaluation throughout the year. Hubs will become Words for Work partners. The National Literacy Trust will retain ownership over the Words for Work product but give permission for the hubs to charge schools to take part in the project. This model will allow the central project team to remain relatively small and reduce the cost of running the project.

With the new two year award from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, this model will be implemented and delivered between October 2011 and September 2013. In the first year, five hubs will be given a small grant and tasked to manage five schools in their region to deliver Words for Work. Hubs will be supported with training and resources from the project team. In the second year a further twenty to twenty-five hubs will manage Words for Work in their region. Hubs will sustain themselves by charging schools for the Words for Work package. This model will significantly increase the reach of the project without incurring a significant increase in cost and capacity requirements centrally. The long term aim is to facilitate a national roll out of Words for Work to as many regions and schools across the country as possible.

## Appendices

### Appendix a)

#### Main findings from initial research with schools, October 2009

- Most of the speaking and listening provision for children focused on those deemed to have speech and language problems. There were several projects being piloted or run which offered provision to practitioners working with children with speech and language impairments.
- Some projects, such as Jack Petchey's Speak Out, encouraged youth engagement with speaking and listening through competition.
- Current provision was delivered through extra-curricular activity, clubs or special, off-timetable days.
- There are some action research projects happening, mostly at primary level, into youth participation and communication.
- The English National Strategies team at the then DCSF (now DfE) had developed a Functional Skills Agenda which required schools to teach 'real and life skills' which were rooted in 'real life' experiences. These would prepare the young people for life after school. Some of those skills were to do with communication. The FSA was in the final stages of a three-year pilot. The plan was to make this statutory from September 2010. Schools that were interviewed who were not on the FSA pilot had little or no planning in place to meet the FS requirements when they came in.
- The majority of schools that were interviewed had few examples of provision or activity that directly related to speaking and listening skills. English departments did some work on it to cover the speaking and listening units of the GCSE in years 10 and 11. Most schools admitted that most teachers spent no time on speaking and listening skills with their classes.
- The general attitude amongst teachers was that speaking and listening was something everyone did naturally and not something that would be taught to young people.
- Most schools had some experience of contact with local businesses, usually in years 10 and 11. Activities tended to be off-timetable enterprise days, mentoring and work-experience placements.
- Many schools admitted that young people had little or no preparation for work-experience placements and as a result the success of these was hit and miss. Students who were more confident and able to speak out tended to have a better experience than those who lacked self esteem and communication skills.

In addition, the following key points emerged:

1. Teachers from the English Departments perceived a gap in the curriculum around communication skills, particularly for those students likely to leave school at 16 and enter the workforce.

2. Words for Work would provide schools with a framework to deliver the Functional Skills Agenda.
3. Doing the project in year 9 would help to prepare students for going on work experience in year 10, which would enable them to get more out of it.
4. Teachers felt that local businesses should be more involved in their local schools and were keen for the project to be a springboard for forging stronger links for the future.

## **Appendix b)**

### **Initial task timeline for second pilot year schools**

#### **Pilot timeline Schools**

September	October	November	December
Sign up to take part in WFW pilot			
Provide contact details for WFW team			
Agree to take part in an initial set up meeting			
Attend set up meeting with PM and agree to initial set up timeline provided by WFW team	Attend set up meeting with PM and agree to initial set up timeline provided by WFW team	Start to action tasks on timeline:  1. appoint a co-ordinator for the programme 2. appoint a named contact to deal with outside communication 3. disseminate information to the wider school community  4. liaise with business links to arrange meetings to negotiate partnerships	1. download WFW resource pack and start to use set up section 2. agree a date for a delivery workshop from the Project Manager 3. liaise with business links as they recruit volunteers 4. fill in project timetables for set up and workshop delivery  5. share timetable information with businesses to help them with recruitment  6. meet with businesses to negotiate partnerships
Pass over details of business contacts to WFW team to follow up	Pass details of business contacts to WFW team to follow up		1. download evaluation toolkit 2. attend delivery workshop 3. arrange a visit to the school by business volunteers to meet staff, orientate the environment and finalise details for the workshops. 4. send the pre pilot evaluation tools for businesses to co-ordinator and volunteers

## **Appendix c)**

### **Words for Work Case Study Questions**

#### **Key messages**

1. Words for Work unlocks speaking and listening skills in young people
2. Business volunteers working directly with young people improves knowledge, confidence and skills in communication

#### **Questions for Individual Interview - Pupil**

- What is your name/age?
- Could you explain your involvement in the WfW project? How long have you been involved?
- Why did you get involved with the project?
- What did you think you'd get out of it?
- What have you enjoyed?
- What has been the best bit so far? Why?
- What has been new or different about the WfW experience?
- What have you learnt from taking part in WfW?
- Do you think you are a more confident communicator than before you took part in WfW?
- If yes, why do you think this is?
- Do you think you have got any new skills? If so, what are they?
- Do you think you'll be able to use what you've learnt in the future?
- Did you think communication was a skill that should be taught in schools before you started WfW? What do you think now?
- Why do you think speaking and listening is important?

#### **Questions for Individual Interview – Business Volunteer**

- What is your name/job? Where do you work?
- Could you explain your involvement in the WfW project? How long have you been involved?
- Why did you get involved with the project?
- What did you expect to get out of it?
- What have you enjoyed?
- What has been the best bit so far? Why?
- What has been new or different about the WfW experience?
- Were there any barriers to WfW achieving its aims?
- Is there anything that could have been done better?
- Do you think the pupil you're working with is a more confident communicator since taking part in WfW?
- If yes, why do you think this is?
- Do you think the pupil has acquired new skills? If so, what are they?
- Do you think they'll be able to use what they've learnt in the future?
- Did you think communication was a skill that should be taught in schools before you started WfW? What do you think now?
- Why do you think speaking and listening is important?

## **Appendix d)**

### **Evaluation Collection Summary**

This provides details of the numbers and percentage of responses collected for each of the surveys and assessments in the evaluation toolkit sent to schools. All the quantitative data in the outcome results section of this report is based on these numbers.

#### **Pupil pre-project survey**

<b>Number of surveys completed</b>	<b>Number of surveys incomplete</b>	<b>% surveys spoilt and discounted from analysis</b>
177	13	7.34%

#### **Pupil post-project survey**

<b>Number of surveys completed</b>	<b>Number of surveys incomplete</b>	<b>% surveys spoilt and discounted from analysis</b>
145	6	4.13%

#### **Volunteer pre-project survey**

<b>Number of surveys completed</b>	<b>Number of surveys incomplete</b>	<b>% surveys spoilt and discounted from analysis</b>
27	0	0%

#### **Volunteer post-project survey**

<b>Number of surveys completed</b>	<b>Number of surveys incomplete</b>	<b>% surveys spoilt and discounted from analysis</b>
46	11	23.91%

#### **Teacher questionnaires**

<b>Questionnaire</b>	<b>Number of completed questionnaires received</b>
Midpoint	8
Endpoint	8

## **Skill assessments**

Section three of the Words for Work resource pack given to the pilot schools was a skill assessment framework. This was for delivery teachers to enable them to observe and assess the pupils' skill acquisition during the course of the Words for Work project. Skills were drawn from learning objectives taken from

- KS3 National Curriculum English speaking and listening
- National Strategies framework
- Level 2 Functional skills

Teachers were advised to pick a sample of pupils' with a range of abilities and observe them during several workshops and record instances where they demonstrated the skills. At the end of the project, teachers were asked to fill in an assessment form for those sample pupils indicating the skills they had acquired and adding comments where relevant. In consultation with the teachers involved the final assessment form was limited to the ten functional skills that were relevant to the Words for Work project. Appendix g shows the form that teachers used. We received 39 skill assessments from 6 participating schools.

## **Additional feedback material, not used in this report**

In addition, we received 64 weekly feedback sheets from volunteers, which helped the project team manage the volunteers effectively and understand the quality of delivery in each school. We also received 83 volunteer training evaluation forms.

## **Appendix e)**

### **Factors Affecting Evaluation Collection and Analysis**

#### **i) Communication/ engagement**

One affecting factor was as a result of inconsistent communication and engagement from school contacts. One school did not respond to any attempts to get in touch after volunteer training was delivered, and consequently no data at all is available for this school. One school was clearly struggling with organising and managing the project but did not communicate that to the project team until it was too late. As a result they failed to deliver phase two and therefore there is no data available. Several other schools had to be repeatedly reminded by email and phone to complete the evaluation tools required and send them back to the project team.

#### **ii) Access to technology**

It may be possible that some of the schools that participated did not have easy access to the computer technology required to complete the surveys, and paper-based questionnaires may have been more appropriate.

#### **iii) Organisational support of Words for Work**

The Words for Work project team recruited and managed volunteers for 8 of the 13 schools; 91 individual volunteers. The culture of support for the project in these organisations varied. This resulted in difficulties enthusing support remotely for collecting evaluation data; although evaluation and feedback time allocations were stated clearly in initial volunteer recruitment adverts, some volunteers did not engage with this part of the pilot. Schools also had organisational support issues that affected both the delivery of the project and the evaluation engagement. In some cases, teachers were delegated the role of delivering Words for Work by a senior colleague who was not present at initial discussions which detailed the evaluation expectations.

#### **iv) Capacity**

6 of the 13 schools partially completed the evaluation tasks. 6 of the 13 schools completed all of the evaluation tasks. Some teachers were responsible for setting up and delivering the project single-handedly and found the evaluation an ‘add-on’ to the project delivery. One school delivered phase one of Words for Work with the help of a Local Authority Secondary English Consultant, but this contact left their role after completion of phase one. The school were unable to deliver the rest of the project and therefore post-project data from pupils, teachers and volunteers was not collected. Attempts were made to discuss with the school why the project broke down, but the school did not engage with these attempts.

#### **v) Time factors**

6 of 12 eligible schools (discounting School J) completed the post-project surveys in the last week of the summer term. The post-project survey responses for these schools were particularly low in three of the cases (School L 6 of 18, School K 7 of 12, School I 9 of 21). The last week of term is often extremely relaxed, and this is not considered to be an optimum time for collection of pupil evaluation data. Of these 6 schools, 4 had completed Words for Work delivery over a month before the end of term. Also, some schools delivered Words for Work to a chosen group of students who would not usually be in class together. When the project delivery had finished, no time was allocated for this group to meet up again to complete the evaluation.

**vi) Understanding of importance of evaluation**

Efforts were made to ensure evaluation was seen as an integral part of the pilot project. In some schools, it was difficult to engage delivering teachers with this part of the process. However, although three schools did not complete the pre-project survey (School E, School M, School J) and only two pupils at School H completed this, all schools who completed Words for Work ensured some participating pupils completed the post-project survey, even if they did not complete their own evaluation tasks.

**vii) Quality of survey completion**

There are several instances of erratic survey completion. Surveys that omitted significant amounts of data have been discounted from the final thorough data analysis.

**Appendix f)**

**This table illustrates individual schools' set-up and delivery performance**

School	Set up and preparation	Communication with project staff	Recruiting volunteers	Relationship management of volunteers	Delivery Phase One	Delivery Phase Two	Celebration event held
A	Reasonable	Reasonable	WFW team	Good	Poor	Good	Yes
B	Good	Good	WFW team and school	Good	Good	Good	Yes
C	Reasonable	Reasonable	WFW team and LA rep	Reasonable	Good	Reasonable	No
D	Good	Good	WFW team and LA rep	Good	Good	Good	Yes
E	Good	Good	School	Good	Good	Good	Yes
F	Poor	Poor	WFW team	Poor	Good	Poor	No
G	Good	Reasonable	School	Good	Good	Good	Yes
H	Good	Reasonable	School	Good	Good	Good	Yes
I	Good	Good while LA rep in place	WFW team and LA rep	Reasonable	good	good	No, ran out of time
J	Good	Good while LA rep in place	WFW team and LA rep	Very poor	Good, supported by LA rep.	Didn't manage to deliver at all	No
K	Reasonable	Reasonable	WFW team and school	Reasonable	Good	Good	Yes
L	Very poor	Very poor	WFW team and LA rep	Reasonable	poor	Poor	No

<b>M</b>	Poor	Very poor – no contact since volunteer training	School	No information	No information	No information	No information
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## **Appendix g)**

### **Observation visit reports**

#### **School A**

This is a new Academy on the site of a failing school. The school has a high percentage of FSM and an average percentage of ESL. The visit took place during workshop eight. There were eighteen pupils and five volunteers present. The pupils were all low ability, some from the SWAN Unit attached to the school who have severe learning issues.

The teacher had adapted the resources and workshop plans to fit the special needs of this group very well. They had done posters, interviews, presentations and lots of talk activities about work skills and communication. This session was divided into two halves. The first half took place in a classroom where the teams sat with their volunteers and discussed what qualities and skills employers looked for in a prospective employee on an application form. They also discussed what kind of job their own skills would make them suitable for. The second half the group moved into the IT room and filled out an application form on the computer based on what they had discussed in their teams. Then they went onto a Local Authority job website to look for a job that suited their skill set. This activity had come about because the pupils had loved the session on interview skills and had expressed a desire to find out more about the process of getting a job. I was impressed by the confidence of the teacher to respond to the interest expressed by the pupils and adapt the resources to match this. She clearly knew the resources well and had spent some time preparing additional ones.

The pupils were all engaged in the tasks. They were confident talking in a group with the volunteers and it was clear they were really enjoying having the volunteers there. The teacher remarked on the usefulness of expanding their awareness of life after school and marvelled at the fact that they were able to work independently. The volunteers were all very enthusiastic, knew what their role was and were engaging well with the pupils. The volunteers I interviewed expressed their surprise at the level of competence of a lot of the pupils in the beginning and said that they had witnessed a real leap in their ability to engage and interact during the course of the project.

The teacher was very pleased with what the project was achieving whilst acknowledging that this cohort of pupils were not able to engage in the higher level skill acquisition and understanding that the project offers. She admitted that she had not had very good support from the senior management in the school but that the volunteers had been really proactive and supportive. The volunteers agreed that they hadn't felt that their presence was valued amongst senior staff and that they hadn't met the head during their time there.

#### **School B**

This is a school that has turned itself around over the last five years and is now on its way to being a successful school. It has a higher than average percentage of FSM and ESL pupils. I arrived at the beginning of workshop seven. There were 30 pupils and 12 volunteers present. The pupils were mixed ability. The teams started the session by playing a team building game. The atmosphere was relaxed and the volunteers and pupils were interacting well with each other. The teacher in charge was very enthusiastic and well organised and led the session well throughout. On the wall was a large display of the work that the group had been doing during the project. After the team building game the teams sat round tables and made their plans for the design and completion of their Words for Work products. I was very impressed with the level of engagement that the majority of pupils showed throughout this workshop.

The teams were working together well and the volunteers facilitated the pupils

to make decisions and negotiate with each other successfully. Everyone was comfortable working together and it was great to see the pupils taking the lead in making decisions and using lots of speaking and listening skills and teamwork skills during the workshop. The teacher focused her attention on spending some time with each team in turn questioning them about their plans and observing their use of skills. By the end of the workshop all the teams had a clear idea for their product and had a complete set of plans to work from in the following sessions. My one criticism of the session was that the teacher had not left enough time at the end of the workshop for a full evaluation of the session.

The two volunteers and two pupils that I interviewed were all very positive about the project and all felt that they were benefitting from taking part and learning a lot from each other. The volunteers commented on how satisfying it was to share their experience and knowledge with the pupils and their only complaint was that they wished the sessions were longer and that there were more of them. They also commented on how well they were treated by the school and that they felt very valued by all staff they met, especially the head.

The head teacher came into the workshop twice during my visit and walked round the tables talking to pupils and volunteers. When I asked a pupil they said that the head had been into every workshop so far to see what was happening. This level of engagement from the head clearly had a positive effect on the project and on the satisfaction levels of the volunteers.

### School C

This is an average school in an area of average FSM and low ESL. There were 18 low ability pupils and three volunteers present. The visit was during workshop eight. I received a warm welcome from pupils, one of the volunteers and particularly the teacher leading Words for Work. The workshop held some of the pupils' focus, but a minority of the pupils were playing on their phones. The pupils I interviewed were extremely polite and quite enthusiastic about the programme, although I did sense that they had been 'cherry picked'. The pupils taking part in this Words for Work were, according to the teacher, one of the lower ability sets in the year. Volunteers fed back that the structure of the workshops had been fairly disorganised, but they felt it was not indicative of the support of the lead teacher; room issues and technology issues hampered many plans. Volunteers commented that it felt very much like a 'school project' as opposed to an experience enabling pupils to identify with structures that are necessary in the workplace. One of the volunteers commented that in the workplace, technology would have been checked beforehand if it was needed, and any issues would be resolved before it was needed. Pupils were on the whole engaged in the experience, but a communication breakdown led some of the pupils to believe there was a 'prize' of a trip to London for the winning team. This was not the case, and has never been the case for this year's project.

The pupils seemed engaged if a little distracted and not entirely focussed on their activities. The lack of structure (the workshop plan in the resource pack was not followed) in the workshop created a culture of 'school project' as opposed to a project that gives pupils the opportunity to rise to a challenge and behave as if they were immersed in a professional environment. Consequently, it seemed as if there was a missed opportunity – pupils were not encouraged by the structure to communicate in a different way to how they communicate now. One comment from one volunteer suggested she had not noticed any difference in any of the pupils she was working with. Another volunteer, contrastingly, commented that one of the pupils in her group had really come out of his shell this week – he was focussed, contributed to ideas and used his initiative. The volunteers all expressed a desire to see the workshop plans before each session so they are more prepared.

### **School D**

This is a new Academy opened on the site of a failing school, in its second year. The area has a high level of long term unemployment, high FSM and average ESL. This visit took place during workshop nine. There were eighteen pupils and six volunteers present. The pupils were mixed ability. The teacher was organised and focused and clearly knew the resources well. The teams were coming to the end of the workshops and all knew exactly what they were doing and got on with their tasks independently. The teacher remarked that she had been able to take a back seat and observe the session today. The pupils and volunteers were working together well and I observed that the pupils were communicating well with each other and were very focused on what they were doing. The session was quite disparate as each team was doing a different thing and a couple of teams spent the majority of the session in other parts of the school using IT equipment. I thought the teacher could have called all the teams together during the session to evaluate their progress and there was no group evaluation at the end.

The pupils I interviewed were very clear about what they were learning in terms of communication skills and also in their awareness of the world of work. The celebration event invite had been extended to parents so they were excited about showing off their products to their parents at that. This gave them an added focus to get things finished on time. Most of the teams had their plans in view and were referring to them during the session, which was good.

The volunteers were impressed with the progress that the pupils had made, particularly the increase in confidence to communicate with them. One volunteer pointed out that as the volunteers had been split into two groups at the request of the company, with each group attending three workshops it had been more difficult to build relationships with their teams. The teacher countered that by saying that this had forced the pupils to work harder at communicating which was a benefit. Although I didn't see the head during my visit the teacher said that the senior team had been supportive and this had helped with timetabling and running the workshops. However the volunteers did not feel that they had been given the opportunity to meet the head or that their presence in the school was particularly valued.

### **School E**

This is a new Academy that replaced a failing school. It is situated in an area of high unemployment and with a high percentage of FSM pupils. The observation visit took place on the tenth and final workshop. There were 14 pupils and six volunteers present. The pupils were mixed ability. Volunteers were friendly and enthusiastic, and a majority of them went out of their way to tell me how much they support the programme and how much they wish to continue the programme. The pupils were enthusiastic, and as this was the last session, each group was preparing for their presentation, making last minute tweaks and rehearsing the presentation itself. Unfortunately, one group member was absent and he had the USB stick which contained the whole presentation. This meant that this group had to prepare a revised version of their presentation at the last minute, which was very good but a real shame for the group members who had put in additional hours in their spare time to create an exciting presentation! The volunteers reassured the group that sometimes things come up last minute at work and plans can sometimes have to be changed right up until the final minute. The group member who was absent turned up at the session at the very final moment, after the presentations had been delivered. He had been at an additional academic support session. The delivery teacher showed frustration at this, as she said she had asked all extra sessions to be rescheduled so they did not clash with Words for Work. This further suggests the need for Words for Work to be disseminated across the whole school, to ensure that all staff members are aware of the programme.

One group delivered a presentation that they did not seem to be comfortable with. This may be due the volunteer who they were working with, who was enthusiastic but overbearing. In this group, it seemed that pupils were not given the role of 'colleague' that many other participating pupils were given. Instead it seems as if they were forced into presenting, with the best of intentions by the volunteer, but it highlights the need for there to be a more developed person specification for volunteers, and a more stringent selection process in addition to showing interest, completing the training and undergoing a CRB check. The pupils thanked the volunteers at the end of the session, and within the groups they talked about the project and what they had achieved. When the pupils left, the volunteers stayed behind for a de-brief with the delivery teacher.

### **School F**

N.B. This observation was done by another National Literacy Trust member of staff. This is a reasonably successful school with an above average percentage of FSM and ESL pupils. The participating pupils were all high ability. The workshop I observed was towards the end of the project. All the groups had plans for their products in place and spent the session with volunteers creating these products (such as a robot that corrected bad communication and flashcards to help parents improve their children's communication) and putting together their presentations for the celebration event.

The session was fairly disorganised – the classroom wasn't big enough for all the groups to work in and the teacher hadn't arranged resources or IT facilities in advance, so the pupils spent quite a lot of time going round the school trying to get everything they needed for their products. The volunteers did really well at supporting the pupils and they worked really well together.

The pupils I interviewed seemed really clear on the benefits of Words for Work and felt that the project had helped improve their skills. The volunteers enjoyed taking part in the project and could see improvements in the pupils they were working with. However they were frustrated that no other school staff seemed to show an interest in what they were doing and they hadn't been introduced to any senior staff.

### **School G**

This is a new Academy on the site of an averagely performing school with the same staff and senior management team in place. It has a high FSM percentage and average ESL. The visit took place during workshop seven. There were 23 pupils and 6 volunteers present. All the pupils were low ability and many had behavioural problems. The session was led by the Assistant Head brilliantly. He was enthusiastic and focused throughout the two hours. He did a really great introduction and broke the session up with games and quick evaluations which kept the pupils engaged throughout. The end of the session coincided with the end of the school day. When the bell went the pupils were so engaged with the game they were playing no one noticed and no one wanted to leave. This session was the planning session which the teacher had anticipated would be hard for these pupils to engage with but it was so well structured and the volunteers were so clear about their role and their expectations of the pupils that in fact it was very successful. In relative terms this cohort of pupils are learning a significant set of speaking and listening skills which is making a difference to their confidence levels. I witnessed their positive attitude towards the volunteers, when I first arrived the volunteers weren't there and the pupils were noisy and distracted but their body language and attitude noticeably changed when the volunteers arrived. All the pupils were taking part in the team discussions and interacting with the volunteers naturally and comfortably, which the teacher cited as major progress for them as a result of the project.

The pupils I interviewed were very clear about what they had been doing and talked about the benefits of having the volunteers to work with. Both pupils talked about

increased confidence, speaking to people properly, showing respect and listening well as things they'd learned.

One volunteer said that Words for Work had broken down their misconceptions about young people and given them a whole new attitude to them. The volunteers felt that they had been well treated by staff in the school and that their presence was valued. It was clear from my visit that this school had taken the project on board and really prepared well for its delivery. Everyone involved was getting a lot out of the experience. The head teacher came at the end of the session to introduce himself to me and to talk about how valued the project was within the school.

### **School H**

This school is an outstanding school in an area of high unemployment. There were 11 Gifted and Talented pupils present and six volunteers. This was the last session for the group, workshop ten, and it was held at the NHS Health Tec premises. The school and the Health Tec had adapted the sessions so instead of six two-hour sessions, they held four three-hour sessions. The teacher felt that the G&T pupils' communication skills could be improved to match their academic talents.

The groups were working conscientiously and creatively; one group making a video with a health focus to suit the setting of working in NHS premises with NHS volunteers. Another group was constructing a board game that had a focus around emergency response. The facilities the group were working in were fantastic and provided an amazing opportunity for young people to engage in a professional environment.

The pupils seemed to be focussed, but a little disengaged. The volunteers were fantastic, very enthusiastic and provided the group with support, encouragement and treated the pupils as equals in the task in hand. The group were working towards a presentation at a local primary school, so the presentations were written and styled in a way to make them accessible to primary school pupils. There was additionally a celebration event planned, which the Words for Work team received a beautiful invitation for. Unfortunately we were not able to attend this event, but the professionalism with which it was organised is precisely the opportunity we hope Words for Work pupils would have to engage in.

### **School I**

This is a school that is improving having had very low results in the past. It is in an area of high unemployment with a high percentage of FSM pupils. There were 21 pupils and five volunteers present and it was the final workshop, ten. The pupils were mixed ability and were selected by teachers to participate as they were lacking in confidence, and it was felt that Words for Work would enable them to develop their confidence. When I arrived, pupils were in the classroom but the volunteers weren't there. The volunteers were in the staff room, waiting to be called in by the teacher. The volunteers were collected about half an hour into the session. This seemed very bizarre. This was the final Words for Work session, so the pupils were preparing for the presentations. At the back of the classroom was sat a large amount of work pupils had previously completed during the Words for Work sessions. The delivery teacher was very enthusiastic and led the session with focus and structure, using the Words for Work resource as a guide for delivery.

Pupils were given time to rehearse and make final preparations to their presentations, and were given the task of deciding which group would present when. Unfortunately, there was an issue with some of the technology which meant that one group were not able to present their full presentation. This was a real shame, but not an incident that was isolated to this school. The pupils presented their presentations, and all participated. The presentations demonstrated a lot of hard work by the pupils.

One volunteer expressed dismay that her group had not seemed to respond well to the project. She said they had been constantly distracting each other and

were not engaged. The volunteer was very negative about both her experience and the project. I felt that the volunteer was expecting huge change from the pupils, which highlighted a need for amendments for the project in the future; volunteers should understand that the project will not create huge change and impact may not always be forthcoming, but the small steps that young people make are important. This may be an example of a volunteer who has not spent a lot of time with young people which highlights a need for volunteers to know in advance about the pupils they will be working with.

**School J** did not deliver phase two and as a result an observation visit was never made.

### **School K**

This is a successful school in an area of high deprivation and high ESL pupils. The group of volunteers and pupils were working conscientiously and in harmony when I arrived. There were 12 pupils and four volunteers present. The pupils were mixed ability. The group were working on their fourth of six sessions, and were preparing their presentations. The delivery teacher had arranged other rooms for the groups to rehearse in, and all groups possessed the equipment they had asked for previously such as video cameras and computers. The session was led according to the resource workshop plan, and the teacher displayed an obvious enthusiasm and knowledge of the aims and outcomes of Words for Work.

The pupils were focussed and enjoying the experience, and each had a designated role to play to contribute to the sessions. The delivery teacher ensured the session was paused to ensure focus and feedback. One group were making a film demonstrating a good interview and a bad interview. The group had five participants and each participant had a special role – from acting, narrating and filming.

Volunteers were engaged and facilitated group work with ease without leading a group in a particular way. They encouraged the pupils to make their own decisions. Everyone participated and everyone engaged. The volunteers had a great, professional rapport with the pupils. At the end of the session pupils and volunteers worked in their groups to feedback and evaluate.

### **School L**

This is an average school with an average percentage of FSM and a low level of ESL. I visited this school during workshop eight. There were twenty six pupils and six volunteers present. The pupils were mixed ability. I had spent time with the teacher prior to this reviewing the workshop plans and changing them to fit in with the restricted time that had been allocated to each workshop and the smaller number of volunteers that were available. I was interested to see how the workshops were working after helping the teacher to re plan the delivery. I was disappointed with what I saw on this visit. It was clear that the teacher was not really engaged with the workshop plans and hadn't done any preparation before the session. The teacher did not lead the session effectively. There was no introduction at the beginning, no warm up game and no rounding off or evaluation at the end. Consequently the overall sense was that the pupils did not really know or understand what they were doing and why. They had not had clear instructions and no goals or tasks to complete. The teams were generally fragmented, with pairs and small groups of pupils doing separate tasks; with the exception of one group who had a very dynamic volunteer and who were working as a cohesive team throughout. The volunteers were well meaning and enthusiastic but had not had any clear guidance or instruction from the teacher and were therefore a bit lost as to what they should be doing.

I witnessed some good discussions between pupils and volunteers and on the whole the pupils were on task for most of the session, which was only an hour and ten minutes long. The pupils that I spoke to praised the volunteers and generally felt that

they were getting a lot from them being there. Some said they felt more confident and knew more about the world of work but only a few were specific about the speaking and listening and teamwork skills they were learning. One volunteer described the sessions as 'an uphill struggle' and another cited the lack of direction and purpose coming from the teacher as a major issue. This visit highlighted the need for good prior planning, direction and shaping from the teacher and better timings. These factors would have allowed the potential for learning that I saw to have been fully realised.

**School M** did not contact the Words for Work project team after the volunteer training, despite numerous attempts to engage the teachers in communication. An observation was not made.

## Appendix h)

### Schools contact monitoring data

	<b>length of time partnership agreements took to send back</b>	<b>length of time to send back timetables after first request</b>	<b>changed workshop dates</b>
<b>School A</b>	signed in initial meeting	5 weeks	yes
<b>School B</b>	2 weeks	4 weeks	no
<b>School C</b>	4 weeks	3 weeks	yes
<b>School D</b>	Signed in initial meeting	12 weeks	yes
<b>School E</b>	signed in initial meeting	3 weeks	no
<b>School F</b>	3 weeks	8 weeks	yes
<b>School G</b>	16 weeks	16 weeks	no
<b>School H</b>	4 weeks	10 weeks	yes
<b>School I</b>	2 weeks	10 weeks	yes
<b>School J</b>	2 weeks	5 weeks	yes - changed so much phase two of the project was not delivered
<b>School K</b>	4 weeks	3 weeks	no
<b>School L</b>	1 week	7 weeks	no
<b>School M</b>	4 weeks	Never received	n/a

The information collated here flags up another key issue which affects the feasibility of schools delivering Words for Work successfully that is timetabling. 7 of 13 schools changed dates of workshops once the timetable had been confirmed both within the school and with the volunteers. One school changed the workshop dates so many times that the project was unable to be completed and the volunteers were unable to keep up with the constant change.

Some of the reasons given for changing dates included

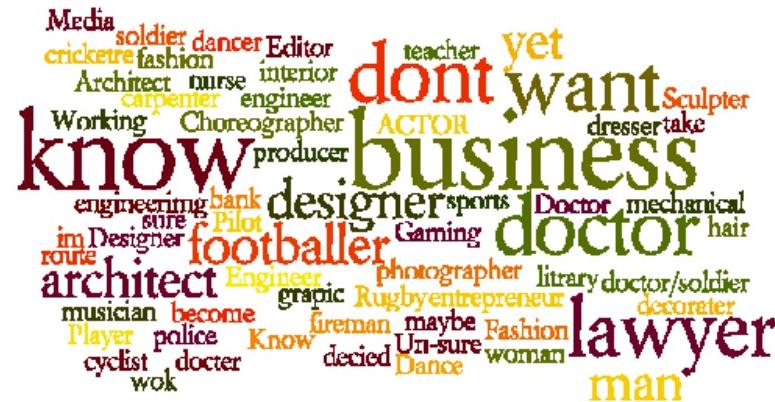
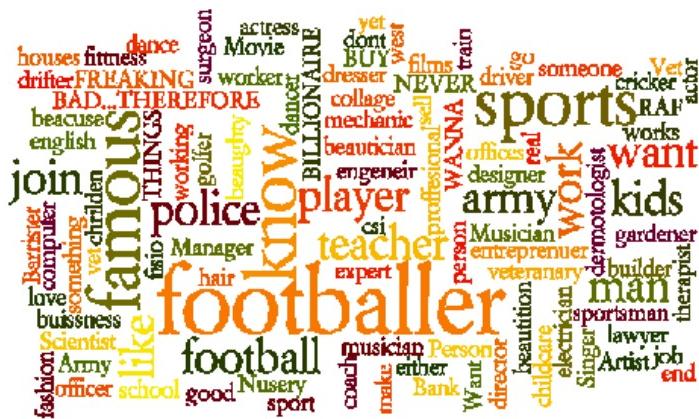
- delivery teachers having to invigilate exams,
- pupils being taken off site for a revision trip,
- exams.

When a number of partners are involved, having a confirmed timetable ensures that everyone can participate fully and the project impact is highest. There is a need for more advocacy work at the pre-partnership agreement stage to ensure that schools understand the implications of good partnership working. In addition there is a need for more widespread dissemination of the project amongst school staff, which should prevent timetable clashes and ensure fuller support from the senior management team.

**Appendix i)****Functional skills assessment sheet**

<b>Pupil:</b>			
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Workshop</b>	<b>Demonstrated</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Make a range of contributions to discussions FS L2	1 and 2		
Present information and ideas clearly and persuasively to others FS L2	1, 3, 4, 5 and 10		
Make choices and decisions, think creatively and act independently FS L2	1, 3, 7, 8, 9 and 10		
Listen to complex information and give a relevant response in appropriate language FS L2	1 and 7		
Engage with the world beyond the classroom FS L2	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10		
Use their skills for real purposes FS L2	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10		
Spend time planning and developing their work FS L2	3, 4, 7, 8 and 9		
Make significant contributions to discussions, taking a range of roles and helping to move discussion forward to reach decisions FS L2	6, 8, 9 and 10		
Experience success in real situations as a result of using their skills effectively FS L2	10		

## **Appendix j) Word Clouds**



Word clouds based on ‘What do you want to be when you are older?’ from the pupil pre-project questionnaire.